

PLATT

MAR 18 1963

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO 37 • ILLINOIS

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

1963 March 13

Joshua Lederberg
Stanford

Dear Joshua:

I have delayed writing you because all sorts of proposed rearrangements have been cooking for the summer and fall, as you may imagine. One interesting possibility was to come to Stanford this summer on a AAAS Science Writing Committee to rejuvenate (or perhaps readultify?) the Kindergarten. This is a Committee your wife is supposed to consult with, I was told. I was tempted, but after thinking it over, I declined.

But what now appears to me more sensible and possible is for me to come to Stanford on my own Chicago or Contract money, from about July 1 to September 15, to work on my Contract topic of "Excited States and Spectra of Biological Molecules", with side excursions into exobiology or anything else of mutual interest to us. Provided, that is, that your Contract might take over "a reasonable further accomodation for the travel and extra living costs of a temporary domicile" as suggested by your letters of January 11 and January 24, since you will not be paying my salary in that case. I am assuming, of course, that there might be office space for me in your vicinity, to maximize the possible interactions. And if you or your secretary could line up some "domicile" for Ann and me for this period (two bedrooms? near stores? pleasant view?), that would be particularly fine.

If something like this is possible from your end, a formal letter of invitation from you would be helpful to me in justifying these summer travel plans to the University here.

As I told you, I will be at Weissbluth's Quantum Biology Conference there the week after next, March 25-28, probably arriving late Monday afternoon since I have to teach my Thermodynamics class that morning. Maybe I can get to see you for an hour or two one of those days, to talk about metro-nomy as well as summer plans. Incidentally, Weissbluth has asked me to give the after-dinner talk to the Conference Wednesday night. You may be amused that I am planning to call it "The New Baconians", and to discuss the relation between meaningful theories ("theories that can be disproved") and crucial experiments, with pointed applications to present molecular theories (poor) and biological theories and high-energy-particle theories (good). I am thinking of using the Lederberg Instructive-Elective dichotomies in the Science article three years ago as an Instructive Example, if you have no objection. So see you soon, John R. Platt

J. PLATT